



# H<sub>2</sub>O Radio

## Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

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## General Information

1. **Q. What is H<sub>2</sub>O Radio?**
  - A. H<sub>2</sub>O Radio is an Automatic Meter Reading System that will send a low-powered radio signal from a unit connected to your water meter. This will allow GCWW to read your water meter automatically without entering your home
2. **Q. Do I have to have it installed at my address?**
  - A. Yes. To gain maximum efficiency **all** homes and businesses that currently have GCWW water meters will have H<sub>2</sub>O Radio installed by the end of 2007.
3. **Q. Will GCWW be changing to monthly billing?**
  - A. It is not our intention at this time to change to monthly billing. However, this new system will allow for a smoother transition to monthly billing if and when the business case warrants it.
4. **Q. How long will this device work?**
  - A. The Meter Interface Unit or MIU has a life expectancy of more than 10 years.  
The water meter has a life expectancy of more than 20 years.
5. **Q. Who should I call for more information about H<sub>2</sub>O Radio?**
  - A. For more detailed information, you can contact GCWW at 513-591-7700. If you

have received a notice from our contractor about the installation in your home, you should contact them at the phone number provided on the notice. (1-800-704-1720).

6. **Q. How do you know that my reading is accurate?**  
A. The meter register is interrogated and the meter reading is transmitted electronically. There is no chance for human error.
7. **Q. I had a touchpad installed on my house 6 months ago and I paid \$40.00. Can I get a refund?**  
A. Unfortunately no. You were charged for a small portion of the costs associated with installing the touchpad. This product was made available to customers as a convenience. However, the installation of the new H<sub>2</sub>O Radio system is free and installation at your home will be easier since you already have the wire installed from the meter to the outside of your home.
8. **Q. How will you know that you have been reading my meter and not someone else's?**  
A. Each meter interface unit or MIU is programmed at the factory with a unique ID number. This number is captured electronically by a bar code reading device at the time of installation. This information is then used to update your account record in our customer information system. When the meter is read electronically it will transmit the ID number and the meter reading making sure we are reading the correct meter.
9. **Q. Is this automated system available for my other utility services?**  
A. You will have to contact your other service providers.
10. **Q. What will happen to the Meter Readers?**  
A. By the end of this project we will not need Meter Readers to manually read meters as they have for over 100 years. However, current Meter Readers will be given opportunities for promotions or reassignments within GCWW. As vacancies occur, new permanent meter readers will not be hired.
11. **Q. My meter is outside in the ground (in a meter box). Will I still get H<sub>2</sub>O Radio?**  
A. Yes, every water meter currently in our system will be fitted with H<sub>2</sub>O Radio. The Installation Company will send out a postcard to you two weeks before coming to your neighborhood. On the day of installation at your home, the installer will knock on your door and inform you that the work is to begin. Your water will be turned off for several minutes. However, you will not have to be home for the installation. When complete, the installer will leave a form on your door to indicate that the installation is complete.



## Cost

**12. Q. How much will it cost me?**

A. There is no additional charge for H<sub>2</sub>O Radio. Upgrading your water meter and installing this new reading technology through the H<sub>2</sub>O Radio Project is free.

**13. Q. How much does the project cost?**

A. The total cost of the project is approximately \$38,000,000.

**14. Q. Will my rates go up to pay for it?**

A. Your rates will not go up directly because of H<sub>2</sub>O Radio. Your rates may increase over the years to fund infrastructure capital improvement projects like H<sub>2</sub>O Radio. However, the improved efficiency and operational savings of H<sub>2</sub>O Radio will help GCWW to minimize increases.

**15. Q. Will my water bill go up?**

A. Older meters tend to run slower and therefore do not measure all the water going through them. The new meter will accurately measure the water that you use. All new meters are tested at the factory to ensure that they register properly. If you see a higher bill, it is usually not because your new meter is over-registering; it is because the old meter was under-registering. GCWW will not back bill customers if their old meter was under-registering, but all customers with new meters will pay for their actual usage.

## Installation

**16. Q. Who should I call for more information about H<sub>2</sub>O Radio?**

- A. For more detailed information, you should contact GCWW at 513-591-7700. If you have received a notice from our contractor about the installation in your home, you should contact them at the phone number provided on the notice.

**17. Q. What work has to be done to install it at my home?**

- A. Generally the Installer will locate your inside meter, remove the old meter, install the new meter and run wire along a wall or foundation. A 3/8 inch hole is needed to connect the wire from the water meter to the H<sub>2</sub>O Radio unit which is in a 4" x 6" x 2" gray plastic case attached to the outside of your home, usually on the side of the house. Existing holes will be used whenever possible. When necessary, holes drilled in your home will be unobtrusive and properly caulked. If your meter is located outside in the ground, (in a meter box) in most cases, there will be no noticeable difference in appearance. The installer will clean up the area, make sure your water is turned back on and confirm that the unit is working before leaving.

**18. Q. Will you have to drill holes in my walls?**

- A. Yes. A 3/8 inch hole is needed to connect the wire from the water meter to the H<sub>2</sub>O Radio unit which is in a 4" x 6" x 2" gray plastic case attached to the outside of your home, usually on the side of the house. Existing holes will be used whenever possible. When necessary, holes drilled in your home will be unobtrusive and properly caulked.

**19. Q. If I have a problem after installation, whom do I contact?**

- A. If you notice a problem immediately after the installation or within 30 days afterwards, you should first contact VSI. If, however, you notice the problem months later or are uncertain, you should contact GCWW at 513-591-7700.

**20. Q. Is your work guaranteed?**

- A. Yes, our contractor's work is guaranteed for 30 days after the installation. If you find a leak near your water meter within 30 days from the date of the installation, the installer will return and make the necessary repairs.

**21. Q. Why will installers need to access my home?**

- A. If the water meter is located inside your home, it may have to be replaced and the H<sub>2</sub>O Radio unit must be connected to the meter. Installation should take less than an hour.

**22. Q. Will water service be disrupted?**

- A. Yes, in many cases water will need to be shut off for 15 to 20 minutes so that the water meter can be replaced.

**23. Q. How long will it take?**

A. In most cases if your water meter is inside your home the installation should take less than an hour.

**24. Q. Do I have to be home?**

A. An adult does need to be home to let the installer in if your water meter is inside your house.

**25. Q. Why do I need a new meter?**

A. Many of GCWW's meters are more than 10 years old. These older meters are not compatible with the new H<sub>2</sub>O Radio unit.

**26. Q. Will the installation damage my property?**

A. No. H<sub>2</sub>O Radio is in a 4 inch by 6 inch by 2 inch gray plastic case which is attached to the outside of your home. However, if your water meter is inside your home, a 3/8" hole is needed to connect the wire from the new meter to the H<sub>2</sub>O Radio. Existing holes will be used whenever possible. When necessary, holes drilled in you home will be unobtrusive and properly caulked.

**27. Q. Can I have it installed right now?**

A. Unfortunately, no. During this project we are installing H<sub>2</sub>O Radio on a route to route basis only. There is an alternative to the route to route process. GCWW will still be installing touch-pads for customers who want a remote device so the Meter Reader does not have to enter their home. The cost is \$40.00 to cover some of our installation costs and will be available for the first two years of this project. It is not refundable. You may contact GCWW and we can tell you when your neighborhood is scheduled. If it is more than 6 months away, you can fill out an application for the touch-pad installation. After the touch-pad is installed, a \$40.00 charge will be added to the water bill. This meter will not have to be changed to install H<sub>2</sub>O Radio, and in most cases, the installer will not have to enter your home again.

**28. Q. I have a finished basement, can this still be installed? What do I have to do?**

A. Yes, in most cases H<sub>2</sub>O Radio can still be installed. If paneling or walls enclose your water meter, you may have to expose it so that the installer can get to it. Sometimes plaster ceilings can be a problem, but the installers are trained professionals and will do their best to install H<sub>2</sub>O Radio in a way that is satisfactory to you.

**29. Q. What if we have a leak after the meter is installed?**

A. If you find your water meter is leaking within 30 days of the installation of H<sub>2</sub>O Radio, you should contact VSI. However, if it has been more than 30 days, or you are uncertain, you should contact GCWW at 513-591-7700.

**30. Q. What happens if the wires are cut?**

A. If the wires happen to be cut you should contact GCWW immediately at 513-591-7700. Our Service Representatives will make necessary repairs.

## **Scheduling**

**31. Q. Will I have to take off work?**

- A. An adult does need to be home to let the installer in if your water meter is inside your house. However, there may be opportunities to schedule an appointment outside of your normal work hours.

**32. Q. What hours are available and can I make an appointment?**

- A. VSI, our installation contractor, will be installing H<sub>2</sub>O Radio Monday through Friday from 8:00 A.M. to 7:00 P.M. and on Saturday from 8:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. You can make a morning or afternoon appointment.



## Radio Signals

**33. Q. Will the radio read signals interfere with any of my other electronic devices?**

A. No. The low powered strength of the radio signal is similar to a cordless phone. It will not interfere with other phones, pacemakers, computers, baby monitors or other electronic devices. It complies with Part 15 of the FCC Rules which states that operation is subject to the following two conditions: (1) this device may not cause harmful interference, and (2) this device must accept any interference received, including interference that may cause undesired operation.

**34. Q. How does H<sub>2</sub>O Radio work?**

A. H<sub>2</sub>O Radio is an electronic system comprised of a water meter, an electronic meter register, a meter interface unit (MIU) and a wire to link the two together. The meter interface unit's circuitry reads the water meter and then transmits the radio signal to a data collector (i.e. A handheld or a laptop computer). The information is brought back to our offices and downloaded to our billing system. Usually a bill is generated and mailed to the customer within two business days.

**35. Q. Why are we doing H<sub>2</sub>O Radio?**

A. H<sub>2</sub>O Radio is a proven technology used successfully throughout the United States. Customers will receive timely, accurate bills based on an actual meter reading, without the need for a meter reader to enter your home. This is more convenient for our customers and safer for our employees. GCWW is always looking at new technologies to enhance customer service and help keep our rates as low as possible.

## Installers

**36. Q. Who will be installing H<sub>2</sub>O Radio?**

A. GCWW has contracted with VSI Group, Inc., an installation-contracting firm. Their installers will be installing all units in the H<sub>2</sub>O Radio project.

**37. Q. Who will contact me?**

A. VSI Group will contact you either by mail or phone to let you know they are scheduling dates for the H<sub>2</sub>O Radio installation in your neighborhood.

**38. Q. Will water meter readers come to my home after H<sub>2</sub>O Radio is installed?**

A. No. A water meter reader will not have to come into your home to read your meter for your quarterly bills. In the future, a GCWW representative will drive by to obtain the reading from the H<sub>2</sub>O Radio unit that is transmitting the reading via the radio signal.

**39. Q. How will I know the installer works for you?**

A. VSI, our installer, will contact you prior to coming to your house, either by post card, a notice left on your door, or a phone call. You can call them to schedule a day for the installation service. They will be wearing blue uniforms, with a VSI logo. They will carry a VSI photo ID and a GCWW contractor's photo ID card. Their vehicles will be white with the H<sub>2</sub>O logo on the sides. However, if you have any suspicion, please call 513-591-7700 and we will be able to verify if they are scheduled to be in your area.

**40. Q. Do I have to be home for the installation?**

A. An adult does need to be home to let the installer in if your water meter is inside your house.

## Keys

**41. Q. The Water Works has a key to my property that is used to obtain water meter readings. What will happen to this key?**

A. Some customers have provided the Greater Cincinnati Water Works with a key to their property for the purpose of obtaining regular meter readings. With installation of H<sub>2</sub>O Radio, the Water Works will no longer need these keys.

You will receive a letter approximately 90 days after the H<sub>2</sub>O Radio project has begun in your neighborhood. This letter will ask if you want your key returned. If you would like the key returned, you can contact our Call Center at (513) 591-7700 during business hours of 7:30am –5:30pm. After providing the necessary information, the key will be returned by Certified mail. Or you may visit the Greater Cincinnati Water Works website at: <http://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/gcww> or the City

of Cincinnati website at: <http://www.cincinnati-oh.gov> to find links to a “Key Return Request” page.

If you would like the key returned immediately after your H2O Radio installation is complete you may contact the Call Center at (513) 591-7700 or use the website Key Return Request form.

The key to the property will continue to be used to obtain regularly scheduled meter readings until the H2O Radio installation is completed in your neighborhood.

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